

## **The Role of School Principals in Financial Management and its Effects in Implementation of Free Day Secondary Education in Trans-Nzoia East Sub-County, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** In January 2008, the Kenya government declared Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in all public schools in the country as a fulfillment of Education for All (EFA) which is a global commitment and strategy to give children universal education. As a result key aspects of the Free Secondary Education on academic performance remain unknown. The study was to investigate school-community support and implementation of Free Day Secondary Education in Trans-Nzoia East sub-county, Kenya. The study answers the following questions; what is the role of principals in financial management and its influence implementation of FDSE. The study adopted Human Capital Theory based upon the work of Schultz (1971), Sakamota and Powers (1995). The study adopted the descriptive survey design and the population of the study comprised of 14 Day Schools that present candidates for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Trans-Nzoia East Sub-County. The sample size consisted of Principals, Teachers and students of 14 day secondary schools drawn from the study population. Purposive sampling was used to select the principals and class Teachers, while stratified random sampling was used to select student respondents. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires, an interview schedule for Sub-County Director of Education and document analysis. Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient was used to determine reliability of instruments and a co-efficient of 0.755 was obtained which was above the recommended value of 0.5. Mugenda & Mugenda, while validity was determined by consulting with the supervisors, experts in research and colleagues from the School of Education, University of Eldoret. Data collected was presented on tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The background information of the respondents included gender, Age, professional qualification, teaching experience, managerial position and attendance of financial management in-service courses was collected. Financial management skills of principals influenced the implementation of Free Day Secondary Education policy. The study shows many principals had attended an in-service course organized by Kenya Educational Management Institute, while most teachers had not attended any thus more Seminars and workshops was organized for Teachers. The study also shows that allocation of county bursary to needy students is not fair hence class teachers need to identify needy students. The implementation of Free Day Secondary Education was a challenge in many school since, teacher-student ratio was high, physical facilities, Teaching/Learning materials were not adequate to accommodate those who qualify from primary schools. The output of the study was to provide necessary and relevant information to all stakeholders in the management of secondary schools including Ministry of Education, Education Officers and secondary school principals to help in formulation of relevant policies that are useful in improving the effectiveness of principals in management of Free Secondary Education Programme in secondary schools in Kenya.

**Keywords:** financial management, free day secondary education, school-community support.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Education is a basic human right like all other human rights, everyone is entitled to it regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity or economic status [1]. Worldwide, education is a prominent subject that helps in shaping of the future of an individual. An important attachment to education can be established based on the investment that goes towards education as compared to other programmes in most countries Cohn and Miller [2].

Secondary education has a vital role in ensuring a country's development. A World Bank paper [3] cited secondary education as a prerequisite to economic growth and social development. In order for countries to compete in a globalized economy, it is important for labour markets to have high quality school graduates with relevant skills and knowledge. Competitive global economy, changing production and technology requirement means that individuals have to constantly upgrade their skills in order to compete effectively in the labour market, which emphasize on the ability of individuals to acquire several qualifications for national and regional advancement Lewin [4].

Furthermore, secondary education is increasingly understood as a way out of poverty for many individuals having marked improvement on their standards of living. In Britain, education up to secondary school is fully financed by the government Moon & Mayes [5]. Parents are only required to ensure that children attend schools, while government makes the education facilities available. In the United States of America (USA), the Federal Government is empowered by the constitution welfare clause, Article 1 section 8, to levy taxes and collect revenues for the support of education.

### Implementation of Free Day Secondary Education in Kenya

Kenya declared FDSE in 2008 by allocating Kshs.10,265 per student this incentive was to improve access to secondary education by children from poor household. Free tuition was provided to support funding so that tuition costs would no longer prevent poor families from achievement of secondary education UNICEF [6]. The funding targets key teaching and learning materials (TLM) support for secondary school and free secondary education operations GOK [7]. Free secondary education promotes joint responsibilities between parents, the government and sponsors of schools. The implication is central to the national goal of poverty reduction, therefore calling for the spirit of partnership between the government, parents and stakeholders.

As the state meets the cost of items designated under this programme, parents or guardians are still required to meet the cost of; meals for day scholars, school uniforms, transport from and to school, development projects including building and construction Ministry of Education [8]. The money remitted by the Ministry of Education must have a separate bank account from those holding monies from other sources.

Global trends demands that more skills, values and attitudes are necessary to exploit any global opportunity. Therefore provision of good quality secondary education is a critical tool in generating the opportunities and benefits of social and economic development, World Bank [3]. Educating people means providing opportunities in their hands and is recognized as one of the best anti-poverty strategies. It is also the best way of ensuring a country's economic prosperity and competitiveness Onsomu [9]. Secondary education is a transitional stage for future professionals such as doctors, lawyers and policy makers among others. Secondary education provides a vital link between basic education and the world of work on one hand and further training of education in the preparation of human capital for development and opportunities for life time [3].

Following the need to invest more on education, the Kenyan government introduced Free Secondary Education (FSE) in 2008 as a response to more students from primary schools due to the implementation of Free Primary Education in January 2003 Malenya [10], Orando [11]. In reality, this was not a free secondary education but a subsidy of the tuition fees from the students. Tuition fee payment was waived as it constituted a significant proportion of the finance in meeting the cost of secondary school education, and this was to be a relief to parents, guardians and sponsors Malenya [10].

This policy framework becomes the backbone for implementing free secondary education. Under this programme of FDSE, the government allocates Kshs.10,265 per year student in public secondary schools, while parents pay for accommodation, uniform, examinations, travel among others GOK [7]. About 1,700,000 students benefited from the programme in the year 2011 and the transition rate from primary to secondary rose to 72% in 2011 up from 47% in 2001 according to 2011 economic survey GOK [12]. Currently the government has also requested Heads of primary schools and principals of secondary schools to register pupils and students for national examination without any fee payment. A motion was introduced in parliament by Ikolomani MP Ben Shinali that seeks to amend the National Examination Council Bill in order to compel government to pay the National Examinations Registration Fees for all candidates.

*Poverty still remains a big challenge to many citizens of this country,  
Yet the examination fees as risen to an extent that they cannot afford.  
Many form four and class eight candidates are now being deterred  
from registering for the examinations. I am going to introduce this bill  
so that the government can pay examination fees for the candidates  
to enhance education accessibility [13].*

Records in the Sub-county office in Trans-nzoia East Sub-County show that enrolment rates in secondary schools has increased. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate school-community support and implementation of FDSE in Trans-nzoia East Sub-County, Kenya.

### Statement of the Problem

The introduction of Free Secondary Education which encompasses tuition waiver and Free Day Secondary Education was received with mixed reactions across the country. The proposal to have FSE was welcomed by many education planners and managers at the top management at government who said that it would increase access to enable students get the opportunities they need to move away from vicious cycle of poverty to virtuous cycle of wealthy. Despite the introduction of FDSE, students are still going back for non-payment of other levies and this was because the policy was anchored on political manifesto. The principals who are in charge of school management are expected to play an important role in ensuring the smooth functioning of schools and proper and efficient use of available financial resources especially after introduction of free secondary education. The school management has to undertake tasks that are aimed at ensuring that education is equitable, efficient and accessible to all students. They are also charged with the responsibility of ensuring proper utilization of the school finances. In an attempt to implement the FSE policy, the principals have found themselves in conflict with the parents, education officials and the sponsors because of poor funding from the government. Following campaign pledges of political parties 2017 like NASA and JUBILEE coalition promised Kenyans

Free primary and secondary education immediately after elections on 8<sup>TH</sup> August 2017 which is yet to be implemented. The introduction of full free secondary education comes at a time the Jubilee Administration has also enacted reforms in administration of exams, rooting out corruption and cheating [14]. Therefore this study was geared towards investigating the role of school principals in financial management and its effects in implementation of FDSE.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at achieving the following objective: assess the role of the school principals in financial management and its effects on implementation of FDSE.

### Theoretical Framework

The study was based on human capital theory by Schultz [15], Sakamota and Powers [16]. The human capital theory is based on the belief that individuals and the society at large derive economic gains by investing in people. The theory rests on the assumptions that formal education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population. The theory emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock. According to Fagerhind and Saha [17] human capital provides a basic justification for large public expenditure on education both in developing and developed countries.

Education is also seen as defining and guiding cultural, economic and generational development imperatives of societies, many of the developing nations have thus realized that the principal mechanism developing human knowledge is the education system. Hence they invest a lot of sums of money on education not only as an attempt to impact knowledge and skills to individuals, but also to impact values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations which may be in the nations that best development interest Pschapolous 1988. Parents also feel that in an era of scarce resources their children could better get education and the better chance they will have get well-paid jobs. The poor often look at their children's education as a means of escaping poverty.

**Table 2.1 Fees Structure for Public Secondary School**

Votehead	Term one	Term two	Term three	Total
Repairs, maintenance and improvement	544.00	325.00	217.00	1,086.00
Local travel and transport	517.00	310.00	206.00	1,033.00
Administration	387.00	231.00	154.00	772.00
Electricity water and conservancy	826.00	495.00	33.00	1,651.00
Medical	206.00	123.00	82.00	411.00
Activity fees	329.00	196.00	131.00	656.00
Personal emolument	1,528.00	916.00	611.00	3,055.00
Insurance (medical and property)	355.00	213.00	142.00	710.00
Total fees	4692.00	2,809.00	1,873.00	9,374.00

(Source: MOEST, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2015)

Following the release of 2014 Task Force report on secondary school fees, wide consultations within the executive has been done and it has been found appropriate to adopt the recommendations with some adjustment to facilitate the progressive implementation of the report. In recommending the figures reflected in the report, it was envisaged that key services like adequate teachers' Service Commission (TSC) teachers, rationalized non-teaching staff, subsidies on electricity and water, development of school's infrastructure through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and National Government Financing Mechanisms were to be in place. According to this report schools are supposed to spread these fees over three school terms at the ratio of 50:30:20. The government appreciates schools that have been charging fees below these ceilings and urges them to continue with that trend. Therefore principals, Parents Associations or Boards of Management (BOM) will not be allowed whatsoever to vary the above fees and any deviations from this guidelines will draw disciplinary action as provided for under section 29(2) (b) of Basic Education Act 2013.

The report also shows that the government will meet the full cost of examination for KCSE and it has already paid to Kenya National Examination Council for 2015 candidates in all public secondary schools. This shows how the government is committed to provide education for its citizens for economic growth through increased productivity.

Management is the process of working with and through others to achieve organizational objectives in changing environment. Franklin [18] defines management as a distinct process consisting of activities such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. Management is conceived as an aspect of shared leadership, and the idea of involving teachers in school-level management is known by many names; several scholars have studied teacher empowerment Kahrs [19], Marks and Louis [20], Reitzug [21], a concept that is related to teacher participation in provision of management in schools. Another concept closely related to concept is teacher leadership which includes teacher participation in management as a part of a broader leadership role both within and outside classroom. A more narrowly defined concept is shared governance a term used by Blasé and Blasé [22] shared governance their governing roles with teachers.

It is similar to participative management in various ways and to varying extents, in making decisions in schools that were traditionally made by the Head teacher. Head teachers play a role in the management of all school financial activities, which involves the disbursement of money. The money is obtained through various sources as fees, thus financial

management determines the way the school is managed and will meet its objectives. The principal is responsible for budgeting, accounting and auditing functions of financial management. With the introduction of FSE, schools get some funding from the government while parents are required to meet various other costs such as school development projects and boarding fees Government of Kenya [7].

Secondary school heads receive some leadership training but rarely before starting their jobs, nor does the training cover all aspects of secondary school management that a head teacher will have to face; rather it focuses on the rules for reporting to the government. Most principals participate in in-service or distance education workshops to develop skills in needed areas. These workshops tend to focus on administration and management, for example accountability, resource and financial management and record keeping. School heads themselves recognize that they need more and different kinds of training, such as information technology for financial management and evaluation, strategic planning and human resource management McNeils [23]. The school heads must manage their budgets which come from different sources such as, the central government which is based on enrolment, student fees, which forms the bulk of operating budgets, PTA contributions which are used for school development projects and extracurricular activities can produce some small benefits.

Financial management includes raising the needed funds, prioritizing needs and budget the available funds, spending only the limited amount available, reporting expending in details. Very few school head teachers have management skills in the above areas. Liang [24], points out that secondary heads also report to their Board of Management which tends to focus on financial management. Members of BOM often include political appointees, and representatives from local administration whose loyalty may or may not be primarily to the schools. Hence Heads must respond to queries and may have to work hard to ensure that the B.O.M has the interest of the school at the heart. Kimanzi [25] notes that the principal has a role to play in coordinating parents associations to raise funds for schools developments and he is to assist them in estimating the cost of putting up school facilities. Okumbe [26] observed that educational management has no choice as to whether to train employees or not regardless of their previous training education and experience must be given further training and development. The sessional paper No. 14 of 2012 stresses the need for training of principals as school managers and recommended the in-servicing of school heads in management. According to Wambugu [27] in his study on factors influencing implementation of free secondary education in Kieni West District, school managers lack financial affairs of institutions. Only a

small percentage of school managers and other personnel have attended courses in financial management.

The leadership at the school level plays a pivotal role in ensuring that policies formulated at all levels are implemented in the school. It is the head of the school who interprets clearly and systematically school policies and what they entail. When policies are revealed in the right way then they are likely to be effective. However, policies could go unimplemented at the school level if the head teacher believes that they are wrong. Studies suggest that bureaucrats find it in their self-interest to maintain a moderate expansion of educational system. They tend to also value whatever configuration of education is current and to resist policies that could alter it.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Kothari [28], descriptive survey research design is an efficient method of collecting data regarding the characteristics of populations, current practices and conditions or needs.

### Study Area

This study was conducted in Trans-Nzoia East sub-county, which is about 12km – 24km from Kitale Town and also about 64km – 84km North of Eldoret Town. Trans-Nzoia East sub-county is known for its maize farming and cattle rearing among other economy activities like tea farming. The District has two Divisions namely Kaplamai, and Cheranganyi, and eleven administrative locations

### The Role of Principals in Financial Management and Implementation of Free Day Secondary Education in Trans Nzoia East Sub County

This chapter presents analysis of the data collected during the study, presentation of the summaries and the interpretation of the findings. The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of principals in financial management and its effects in

implementation of Free Day Secondary Education in Trans-Nzoia East sub-county, Rift Valley Kenya. The objective of the study was to assess the role of the school principals in financial management and its effects on implementation of FDSE.

### Management Experience of Principals

The study sought to determine whether teachers and principals had been in the teaching profession to gain expertise in handling of issues, the researcher sought their teaching and management experience and presented the findings in Table-4.2.

The findings on experience in management position of the principals shows that, 60.0% (3) 10 years and above while none had between 0- 4 years. 40.0% (2) of principal respondents had management experience of 5-9 years.

### Role of Principals and Teachers in Financial Management in Schools

The researcher also wanted to find out from the teachers if they have attended any in-service course of financial management and if they have what was the sources of finance and also their financial role It is seen from the findings in Table 4.3 that all100.0%(5) the principals agreed that they have attended an in-service course in financial management.

The principals indicated that they had all attended in-service courses on management. These findings show that they were in a better position to organize the schools' finances. This was due to the Ministry of education recommendations on school heads to be trained on financial management. This shows majority of the teachers had not attended in-service courses on financial management.

Looking at source of finances in school, 60.0% (3) of the principals respondents pointed out that CDF was their main source of finance to their school, 20.0% (1) of the from MOEST, 20.0%(1) from parents.

**Table-4.5: Role of Principals and Teachers in Financial management in schools**

	Principals	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	100
No	0	0
Total	5	100.0
MOEST	1	20.0
CDF	3	60.0
Parents	1	20.0
Total	5	100.0

### Principals Rating of their Supervisory Roles in School

It can be viewed from the findings in Table-4.7 show that most 40.0% (2) of principal respondents

argued that adequacy of securing funds from the government is the most serious challenge, other 20.0% (2) said serious challenge, none neither said moderately serious challenge nor least serious challengeand 20.0%

(1) not serious challenge. To determine whether the schools face challenges in procurement procedures, competent in making school budgets, proper book

keeping in the institutions, payment of fees by students and effective management of income generating activities in the school.

**Table-4.7: Principals Rating of their Supervisory Role in School**

Statements	MSC		SC		MOSC		LSC		NSC	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Adequacy of securing funds from the government	2	40.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	20.0
Procurement procedures in the school	0	0.0	2	40.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	1	20.0
Competency in making school budget	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
Proper book keeping in the institution	0	0.0	1	20.0	2	40.0	2	40.0	0	0.0
Payment of fees by students	3	60.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Effective management of income generating activities in the school	0	0	1	20.0	1	20.0	2	40.0	1	20.0

Key: MSC= Most Serious Challenge SC=Serious Challenge MOSC= Moderately Serious Challenge LSC= Least Serious Challenge NSC= Not Serious Challenge F=Frequency

### Principals Response on Management of Challenges

The principals may face so many financial constraints in running the schools due to limited and inadequate of resources, therefore the researcher sought to know how they manage such challenges. Their responses were presented in Table 4.8. Results showed that 60.0% (3) of principal respondents said they manage the challenges through communicating to parents and delegating of duties which is enhanced

through appropriate supervision of finances while 20.0% (2) said they manage the challenge through sensitizing parents during AGMs on the importance to pay school fees promptly. From the study it is clearly seen that most of the challenges faced are curbed through communicating to parents and delegating of duties which is enhanced through appropriate supervision of finances.

**Table-4.8: Principals Response on Management of the Most Serious Challenges**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Through communication to parents and delegation.	3	60.0
Sensitizing parents during AGMs on the importance to pay school fees promptly	2	40.0
Total	5	100.

The researcher's objective was to find out the role of the school principals in financial management and its effects on implementation of FDSE. Results also indicated that the principals had all attended in-service courses on management. This may be attributed to the Ministry of education recommendations on school heads to be trained on financial management. These seminars would uplift teacher knowledge on institutional financial management. Regarding the roles of the principals in implementing the FDSE it was established that though the principals were not prepared prior to implementation of FDSE they later underwent training facilitated by various bodies. Most teachers employed instruction and facilitation techniques in the implementation of FDSE policy. They formed various committees that spearheaded the implementation process, particularly tendering and procurement committees. They organized training of personnel both internally and externally.

Results indicated that adequacy of securing funds from the government was the most serious challenge. The results show that procurement procedures in schools are faced with serious challenges. This was greatly due to the principals inexperience in financial management and procurement procedures are

faced with serious challenges due to lack of enough money thus tenders are awarded to the cheapest bidder where quality is not a consideration factor. This was in accordance to Wambugu [27] who posed that school managers lack adequate capacity to manage financial affairs of institutions. Only a small percentage of the school managers and other personnel are competent in financial management.

Results indicate that on proper book keeping in the institution most of the principals 40.0% said it was a least serious challenge. These findings conquer with Odali [29], who states that unless a principal knows his or her budget and how to collect money for the improvement of physical facilities and proper keeping of school records, he or she will find himself in problems. Hence the principals should constantly update through training on their financial management skills and expertise. This indicates that lack of expertise in financial management by principals often lead to shortage of critical resources in schools as the available funds are redirected to less important needs. This often results to unsatisfactory performance of teachers and students [30]. From the study findings the principals felt that parents face problems in paying fees for students and it was rated as the most serious challenge. This may

be due to poverty because in many cases these are children from poor households whose parents are unable to afford the cost of secondary education, making the children dwell in the vicious cycle of poverty.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to investigate the role of principals in financial management and its effects in implementation of FDSE. It was noted that school principals experience challenges in the following areas; management of inadequate funds from the government for FDSE, procurement procedures in schools competency in budgeting and accounting, proper book keeping, fee payment by learners and effective management of income generating activities in schools.

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